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Howard [Mitcham?] to Dr. Silver

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2219 Pine Avenue
Gulf port, Miss.

Dear Dr. Silver:

Thank you sincerely for your letter and the clipping from the Jackson, Tenn. paper. You have certainly flung down the gauntlet in a manner that was badly needed. I only hope you don't get a potshard in the urn with your name on it. To defend freedom of thought and expression in Mississippi these days is almost suicidal, they're more afraid of truth than any other one thing, just can't afford to face it, or the house of cards will fall down. As apostles of truth (or close approximations of it) the historians really have a mission to perform in the south to-day. Poets Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren have been trying rather hard, but they have been dealing with abstractions, now is the time for the historian to back them up with cold hard facts.

I am extremely interested in your antebellum interpretations of how the Loco Foco's and States righters put a straight jacket on Southern ~~the~~ mentality which is still there, down to this day. Investigation would prove that there were a few men among the old time Whigs of the forties and fifties who foresaw what was coming (Henry Stuart Foote, perhaps prentiss, and some of the more intelligent Whig Editors; it would surely be interesting to see Foote's speeches to the

legislature just before his resignation in the '50's). If some of our historians would dig these facts up and print them in the JOURNAL OF MISSISSIPPI HISTORY it would make that organ more than just a conglomeration of lamb stew and corned beef hash, a good method of replying to people like Fred Sullens.

As an illustration of the thesis that the mentality of the average Mississippian was much sharper and ^{more} alert in 1850 than ~~the~~ to-day I am sending you some letters by an average Mississippian who went to the California Gold Fields and wrote home to tell about it.

I hope you will follow your opening gun with a real barrage, it's the "bounden" duty of somebody to do so. All Mississippians of intellectual honesty and integrity will be standing solidly behind you... probably a total of half a dozen.

Very Sincerely

Howard Mitchell